

INDIATOBACCOWATCH (ITW) – Newsletter

October 2015

Volume 1

Edition 3

Issue: Tobacco Farmer's suicide in Andhra Pradesh

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Tobacco growers continue to commit suicide due to mounting debts

Tobacco growers have committed suicide in Prakasam district due to failure to sell their tobacco produce. Traders who had committed to buy tobacco at various auction platforms failed to do so resulting in mounting debts which led to this situation.

Tobacco ryots lose interest in tobacco farming in Prakasam district

Having burnt their fingers, tobacco growers in Prakasam district are to shift to alternate crops like chilli and Bengal gram in a big way. Only 75% of farmers coming under Southern Light Soil (SLS) and Southern Black Soil (SBS) auction platform have registered this year. Cultivation of chilli has been done in 8000 hectares which may go up to 25000 hectares this year. Similarly, cultivation of Bengal gram is likely to double to one lakh hectares this year.

Tobacco growers protest by setting fire to tobacco crop in Rajamundry

On the back of failure to sell their produce tobacco growers protested in Rajamundry by setting fire to the crop termed as unsaleable tobacco.

Central and State government to compensate tobacco growers

Union minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman announced a joint package to bail out package for tobacco growers whose produce was rejected in the auction platforms. Accordingly the growers will be provided Rs. 20 a kilo with the Centre contributing 75% of the quantum (Rs.15 a kg) and the state of Andhra Pradesh bearing the balance 25% (Rs.5 a kg).

Economist responds to query on tobacco farmer suicide

Noted economist Jayati Ghosh has responded to the query on tobacco farmer suicide in Andhra Pradesh. She has mentioned that suicides tended to be among farmers who have shifted to commercial crops.

Economist Jayati Ghosh in a response says market for commercial crops tend to be unstable and unpredictable. Tobacco is one such crop. The government is not taking up proper awareness programme among farmers on commercial crops.

Scheme sought to help growers quit tobacco farming

YSRC MP Y.V. Subba Reddy has urged the Tobacco Board to introduce a scheme to help tobacco growers switch over to alternate crops. Chairing the Prakasam district vigilance and monitoring committee, he shared the concerns expressed by TDP MP Sriram Malyadri and MLA's over the spate of suicides by tobacco ryots in the wake of the slump in prices for the key commercial crop in Prakasam district.

We would like to congratulate Mr. Khurshed Ahmad and his team at Advantage Services for winning the best campaign award for their 'Tobacco Free Bihar' campaign at the South Asia SABRE PR awards in Mumbai last month. Kudos to the team for the achievement.

IndiaTobaccoWatch (ITW) is an initiative by organizations working in tobacco control across India to monitor the activities of tobacco industry. Spread the word.

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